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HR 340/HCR 164
REQUESTING AN EXAMINATION OF THE STATE'S
HAZARDOUS WASTE DISPOSAL PROGRAM AND DEVELOPMENT
OF A COMPREHENSIVE HAZARDOUS WASTE DISPOSAL PLAN

Statement for
House Committee on
Energy, Ecology and Environmental Protection
Public Hearing - 13 March 1981

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HR 340/HCR 164 requests the Department of Health to examine and implement a hazardous waste disposal program in accordance with public health needs and compliance with federal standards under the Resources Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976. This statement on HR 340/HCR 164 does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

The Environmental Center recognizes the intent of HR 340 to direct attention to the hazardous waste disposal problem. There are, however, several points which need to be clarified. First of all, the major impediments to Hawaii's implementation of a hazardous waste disposal program have been funding and personnel constraints. The State will continue to have difficulties implementing a comprehensive waste disposal plan unless these needs are met. There has been at least one study completed on hazardous waste activities in Hawaii but little action has been taken on developing a workable program. HR 340 resolves that the "Department (of Health) utilize personnel who have expertise in the area of hazardous waste disposal." To the best of our knowledge, and according to the resolution, this expertise is lacking.

HR 340/HCR 164 also requests a State review of its hazardous waste disposal program. This would be unnecessary since the State does not have a program to review. We also feel that the State need not concern itself about implementing the tracking procedures of RCRA because these procedures are already mandated under federal law.

What is needed now is a way to implement a hazardous waste disposal program. Perhaps the State could appropriate funds to the Department of Health to secure those resources which have limited their progress on this issue in the past.